AN Amical Call TO REPENTANCE, AND THE Practical Belief OF THE GOSPEL; AS

Being the only Way to have Peace and Comfort here, and Eternal Glory hereafter.

To which is annexed an Elenctic Epistle to the Vain-Swearing Tribe.

By *William Watson*, M. A. of St. *Mary Hall* in *Oxford*.

Published for no other end, but the Good of Mankind, and the Promotion of the Common Salvation.

LONDON,
Printed for *Edward Mory*, at the Three Bibles in St. *Paul's* Church-yard. 1691.

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Mark 1: 15:

Repent ye, and Believe the Goſpel.

THE Glorious Deliver of the World from the Infernal Powers, finding it involved in ſo high a degree of Impiety, that nothing, but a previous Repentance, could diſpoſe it for the reception of his moſt Righteous Doctrine; gave the ſinful *Galileans*, which firſt

came under his Bleſſed Inſtruction; this pathetical and earneſt call to Repentance and the Belief of the Goſpel: *Repent ye, and Believe the Goſpel.* From which I ſhall endeavour to ſhew,

1. What ſincere Repentance is.

2. How to be perform'd.

3. The Neceſſity of it.

4. What is the true Goſpel-belief here required.

5. And Laſtly, as an incentive to a more diligent performance of theſe two moſt neceſſary Duties, I ſhall ſpeak ſomething of the Gracious Promiſe that Chriſt has made to the careful Performers of them.

Sincere Repentance is a forſaking of Sin, and embracing of Righteouſneſs, a vigo-

vigorous oppoſing of all Temptations to Wickedneſs, and a ſtrict obſervance of all thoſe holy Duties God has injoyned us in his moſt Sacred Word. Having given the moſt ſhort and comprehenſive definition of Repentance; it ſhall be my buſineſs in the next place, to ſhew how, and in what manner, it's to be performed.

A Diſcovery of your Sins is the firſt thing to be done in order to it; and this you muſt make, by examining your Lives and Converſations, by that, which is appointed, as an infallible Direction, to guide you in all your ways, God's Holy Word. And where you find you have omitted thoſe Du-

ties God has required, and committed thoſe Sins and Offences he has prohibited, make an humble acknowledgment, and confeſſion of it to him, with a truly pious contrition for it, and implore with earneſtneſs, mercy and forgiveneſs through Chriſt's merits; and make a firm reſolution for the time to come, through his aſſiſting Grace (which you muſt never omit to ask for) to caſt away all your ſins, and let it be your greateſt care to keep your ſelves free from iniquity, and allow not your ſelves in any known ſin; no, not of your very thoughts: For altho' they are out of the reach of Human Law, yet they are not of the Divine, but are puniſh-

puniſhable by it, as well as your Words and Actions. And therefore the Prophet *Iſaiah*, when he calls Sinners to repentance, bids them forſake their evil thoughts, as well as their wicked ways and profane diſcourſes. Don't think it enough to forſake thoſe heinous ſins, that are viſible to the whole World; and yet ſtill keep your ſecret ones. Don't inſtead of an entire renunciation of your ſins, grow more cunning, and endeavour rather, that they ſhould be covered, than caſt forth. For the Wiſeman ſays, *He that covers his ſins ſhall not proſper.* And altho, by ſo doing, you may deceive your fellow-creatures, and gain the re-

Iſai. 55. 7.

Prov. 28. 13.

putation of vertuous and godly persons amongst them; yet you cannot deceive God, and escape his critical search; he'll immediately dissect your hypocritical hearts, and discover the unsoundness of 'em, and give to every one
Jer. 17. 10. of you according to his ways, and according to the Fruit of his evil doings. He'll let no wilful offence, whatever it be, whether open, or secret, great, or small, go unpunished. And then, how grosly imprudent are those persons, that will freely and without the least touch of remorse, commit those sins, that are looked upon, by the deceived multitude, as small, and such as are scarcely taken notice of by the Almighty? Surely, what St.

James

James ſays concerning him, that keeps the whole Law, and yet offends in one point, may very fitly be applied to them; for as he is guilty of all (that is, the breach of the whole Law) ſo they that commit any wilful ſin, tho never ſo ſmall, or common, are liable to the ſame puniſhment, that they are (tho it may be in a leſs degree) that commit thoſe that are much greater. Whence you may evidently ſee, that the forſaking of great ſins and offences, and not ſmall ones alſo, is but the chooſing an eaſier place of torment. 'Twill be to no purpoſe to leave off ſome ſins, and allow your ſelves in the committing of others. You muſt hate and abhor

Jam. 2.10, 11.

abhor all ſins, and abſtain, as the Apoſtle adviſes, from all appearance of evil. And ſtrive, and pray earneſtly againſt it, and entirely devote your ſelves to ſerve, love, and Honour God in newneſs of life. 'Tis not a little feigned ſorrow, and a ſlight asking of mercy from God, will heal all thoſe deep Wounds ſin has made in yur Souls; if you ſtill proceed in the ways of iniquity. For a man can never be within the limits of perfect repentance, till he gets out of the circle of wickedneſs. The diſhoneſt perſon muſt become honeſt, and the profane and diſſolute liver devout and ſincere in the ſervice of God with continuance, if ever he expects the

1 Theſ. 5. 22.

remſſi-

remiſſion of his former tranſgreſſions. True repentance turns the ſtream of a man's deſires, and puts him upon a new courſe of life, and makes him ſeriouſly to conſider of his wickedneſs with its heightning circumſtances; ſuch as his ſhameful neglect of thoſe means God has made uſe of to reclaim him, his earneſt deſire after, and voluntary ruſhing into all impiety, his delight in contriving, and diligent ſtudying how to promote wickedneſs, his brutiſh deſpiſing of Reproof and deriding of Advice; his glorying in his Sin, and boaſting of his Iniquity. When theſe ſigns appear in a ſinner, and he begins to be aſhamed and angry at himſelf, that he has

conti-

continued ſo long in the Ser-
Rom. 2. 5. vice of Hell, *treaſuring up to himſelf wrath*, as the Apoſtle ſays, *againſt the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgemeut of God*; and becomes a diligent Practiſer of righteouſneſs and true holineſs; he may then, and not before, be ſaid ſincerely to perform the Duty of Repentance. This of the Manner, now of the Time of Repenting.

He that ſhall ſeriouſly reflect upon the frailties of Human Nature, cannot be ignorant, how often this ſo exceeding neceſſary a Duty ought to be performed. For it being the only thing that can free us from the puniſhment due for our ſins, it muſt be made uſe of as often

as

as we commit any ſin. And ſurely thoſe perſons that lead the moſt holy life, will have juſt occaſion to put this Duty in practice daily. For we are daily and hourly aſſaulted by many temptations to ſin. The Deſtroyer ever watches to deceive us, and there are many ſnares and dangers in all our ways; bad advice and ill examples; beſides our own treacherous hearts, which are naturally averſe to Vertue, and prone to all manner of Vice. All which make us guilty of more ſins every day, than we are aware of. And therefore 'tis abſolutely neceſſary for us to make uſe of a daily repentance; and ſpend that time in examining our own evil actions,

in

in reference to each day, that we are to apt to trifle away in prying ſinfully into the behaviour, and too ſeverely cenſuring the condition of others; when 'tis like, upon a fair and impartial trial, we might find our own much worſe. And therefore I could wiſh, that when you lie down to reſt, before you ſuffer ſleep to ſeiſe your eyes, you would recollect the actions of the day, and earneſtly endeavour to find out what you have done, that you ought not to have done; and what you have left undone, that you ought to have done; that you may let no offence ſlip, without asking pardon for it. And if ever you intend (as I hope you do)

to

to ask forgiveneſs of your Sins, this is certainly the moſt eaſy way, that you can take for it. For now you will not be put to ſo much trouble, or ſo apt to err in the recollection of 'em, as when you have let them run unthought of, for many days, or months together. And if you make a due inſpection into the nature of Sin, and conſider that every wilful offence, without a ſeaſonable begging the Remiſſion of it, renders you obnoxious to everlaſting Puniſhment, you will plainly ſee the great neceſſity of taking this Courſe: For when you go to reſt in the Evening, you are uncertain whether ever you may ſee the Morning; And then, what a miſerable Condition

dition will you be in, if you ſhould be call'd into another World, before you have freed your ſelves, by a timely Repentance, from the Burden of your Sins? Don't, I entreat you, ſuffer Sloth and Careleſneſs to have ſo much Power over you, as to cauſe you to neglect this ſo wholſom and profitable Advice, and content your ſelves with that fruitleſs Expreſſion, Lord, forgive me my Sins, and then think your ſelves free for the committing of more the Day following. But be perſwaded, I am ſure you can't ſay but 'tis for your Good, to take the number of your Sins as exactly, as is poſſible for you, and then beg forgiveneſs of 'em, ſeverally, and in order: And leſt, when

you

you have uſed your beſt endeavours to prevent it, any Offence ſhould ſlip your Remembrance; let the ſaying of the Prophet *David*, *Cleanſe thou me (O God) from ſecret faults*; be always the Cloſe of your Petitions. And believe what I ſay, you'll find little encouragement to increaſe the painful Work of Repentance, by committing thoſe Sins the next Day, that you may eaſily avoid. Pſal. 19. 12.

More than this, you ſhould allow ſome time to take an account of all the Sins, you have been guilty of, throughout the whole Courſe of your Lives; that you may ſee what great need you have, when you have made your beſt Recollections, to pray, as wiſe *David* did,

that

Pſ. 25. 7. that God would not remember the errors and frailties of your Youth; but that he would of his tender Mercy, and for his Goodneſs ſake, forgive you thoſe Multitudes of Sins you have utterly forgotten. And ſure I am, if you could be but once brought to allow your ſelves one day in a Week, or Month, for the performance of this momentary buſineſs, you would find more real ſatisfaction in it, than in all the ſenſitive Delights and enjoyments upon Earth. Let me requeſt you to make this direction alſo worthy your Remembrance, and be careful to put it in practice; and ſurely the preſent eaſe and quiet that 'twill bring to your Conſciences, and the great

aſſurance

assurance that 'twill give you of Gods most gratious Favour and Protection, will quickly make you understand, that the Day that is spent in this exercise, is the best spent of all the days that pass betwixt it, and that, which comes by a certain revolution, to be imploy'd to the same use. These are the ordinary times proper for the performance of this Duty.

There are also extraordinary Times, as when we are under any kind of Trouble or Misery: For whensoever God visits us with Sickness, or any other Calamity, 'tis to let us know, that he is angry with us for our Sins, and is willing, by such Fatherly corrections as these, to

to bring us to Repentance and Amendment. And therefore, at ſuch Times, we muſt not by any means omit it, leſt we render our ſelves guilty of that grievous crime of deſpiſing the chaſtening of the Lord.

Heb. 12. 5.

'Tis the groſs folly of many ſinful People, whom I would in no wiſe have you imitate, careleſly to paſs by all theſe proper Times, and rely ſolely upon the Time of Death, which is altogether improper, and extream dangerous; as will appear.

1. From its Uncertainty; for they may now have ſufficient Time for it, but be taken away, as many others frequently are, in a Moment. There's no Man living can promiſe to himſelf a Day or an Hour.

2. From

2. From the Weakneſs of their natural Faculties and Powers at the approach of Death; whereby they can't be ſo active as is needful in a buſineſs of ſo great Moment.

3. From the improbability of God's beſtowing any more of his aſſiſting Grace upon them, which they have, when offer'd in its proper Seaſons ſo frequently deſpiſed: So that they are in Danger of the like Eruſtration with the Contemners of Wiſdom, and 'tis much to be feared that God will not anſwer to their Calls, or be found of them. *Prov.* 1. 28. 23.

Whence we may infer that Death-bed Repentances are altogether unacceptable to the Almighty, and very unlikely to procure a pardon for our Sins. But

But perhaps you'll think to prove the contrary, by quoting the example of the
Lu. 23.43: penitent Thief. But beware of laying to great a Streſs upon that example, leſt by truſting to the too late Repentance of a Death-bringing Sickneſs, you are forced in vain to repent without end in the raging Flames of Hell. For that is an extraordinary and unparalleled inſtance, twas done at the Time of our Saviours Crucifixion, when he was entring into his Kingdom of Glory; then even earthly Potentates ſhew ſuch Favour, and forgive ſuch Offences, as are very rarely at other Times forgiven. Add to this that God then acted in a miraculous Manner, but now he acts otherwiſe;

otherwiſe; And 'tis the moſt irrational thing imaginable, for us to hope for ſuch a ſudden Converſion, at the time of our departure out of this life: For certainly there is a very great unlikeneſs between this Thief's condition and ours; this was the firſt time of his hearing of Chriſt; and what more could be required of him, than to embrace him, as ſoon as he was revealed unto him? But we have had all the incentives and encouragements imaginable, even from our very infancy, to lay hold on him, and ſtill have refuſed. But ſuppoſe there was not ſuch a vaſt unlikeneſs; yet that hope muſt needs ſtand very feebly, that has but one in-

ſtance (unleſs you can find, what was never yet found, that the Scripture gives any other) to bear it up. It is
Exon 16.4. ſaid, that God rained Bread from Heaven for the Children of *Iſrael*: And yet you would look upon him as a very ridiculous perſon, that in hopes of being ſupplied in the like manner, ſhould omit ſeeking after the ordinary ſupports of life. But truly, I cannot ſee wherefore it ſhould be accounted more vain and imprudent to rely upon this than the other Example, when they are both alike uncertain. The hand of the Lord indeed is not ſhortned ; and his Power is infinite ſtill ; he can reach forth Bread unto us in the

the like miraculous manner, and give us a Pardon, upon our ſuing for it, at the very Inſtant of our Tranſmutation; but 'tis a very great Queſtion whether he will. And therefore, as you would not run the Danger of deſtroying your Bodies, by depending upon the one; ſo neither run the Hazard of ruining your Souls, by relying upon the other. For 'tis only an Example of Conſolation, not of Imitation: And therefore our bleſſed Saviour, that we might not undo our ſelves, by an imprudent imitating of it, and truſting too much to it, has told us that many will ſay unto him in that Day, Lord, Lord, have we not done

ſuch and ſuch Things in thy Name? And then he'll profeſs unto 'em, that he never knew 'em, and ſend them away with that terrible Expreſſion; *Depart from me all ye that work Iniquity.* And hence we may take notice, that a man may defer his Repentance, and ſeeking after Mercy too long to obtain it, and we have for our Admonition, a ſad Inſtance of it in the fooliſh Virgins, who were denied the Favour of coming in to the Marriage, becauſe they came not ſoon enough.

Mat. 7.22, 23.

Mat. 25. 12.

'Tis grievous indeeed to reflect upon the great Dexterity that many men have (tho on better accounts ſtupid and ſenſeleſs enough) to

to argue themſelves out of the Glorious Regions of Eternal Bliſs; as if the ſubtile Deſtroyer of their unwary ſouls had ingaged them, by the promiſe of a huge reward, to a diſputation againſt them, by drawing vain arguments from the example of thoſe that were hired, or as we may otherwiſe expreſs it, *called at the eleventh hour*, without being ſo kind to their abuſed ſouls, as to conſider, that they that were called at the eleventh hour were under circumſtances much different from theirs; for they were never called before; whereas theſe deluded Diſputants have often been, and are ſtill called: And therefore

Mat. 20. 6.

I would that they might in time underſtand their error: for it will be in vain for them to expect the ſame favour that they had. Surely, for ought I can find in any place of Scripture to the contrary, they that defer their repentance, upon a groundleſs hope of better opportunities when they are grown older, and come to be indiſpoſed, and are taken off the buſineſs of this world by ſickneſs, and are within a few paces of death, have juſt cauſe to fear that the ſaying of the Prophet *Iſaiah* will be verified in them, that he that made them will
Iſa. 27.11. have no mercy on them, and he that formed them will ſhew them no favour.

For

For repentances of this ſort ſeem rather to ariſe from the fear of ſuffering Hell-Torments, than out of any real love to God; and certainly thoſe Duties that are performed more out of the fear of Puniſhment, than a true Love of God, have not that ſincerity in them, that is neceſſary to make them acceptable unto the Throne of Grace: And then what can be the portion of the vain performers, but eternal ruin? But 'tis like thoſe indiſcreet perſons, that careleſly run on in wickedneſs, and vainly perſwade themſelves, through the falſe deluſions of the Devil, and their own ſinful hearts, that they ſhall eaſily procure a pardon for

their Sins, by repenting a little before their Death, may ſay, can this be true, that Death-bed Repentances are for the moſt part void of Sincerity? Let them conſult daily Experience, and they will find it ſo: For it has frequently been obſerved, that many wicked Perſons, when they have been weakned by violent Diſeaſes, and imagined that their Diſſolution has been drawing nigh, they have lamented their former evil Courſes, and in the judgment of thoſe that were preſent been very penitent; and yet when it has been the pleaſure of the Almighty to touch 'em with his all-healing Hand, and reſtore 'em to a healthful State again, they have led

as

as bad, nay, oftentimes worſe Lives than before. And was their Repentance now (judge ye) ſincere? Certainly if it had the thoughts of God's extraordinary Favour in delivering of 'em from everlaſting Death, would have ſtirred up in them ſuch an earneſt Love to God, and ſuch an awful Reſpect to all his Commands, and brought them into ſuch an utter Hatred and Deteſtation of Sin, that they could never have faln under the Power of it again, in a greater Meaſure, than before. Thus you ſee how the Performance of Repentance runs, both as to the Time, and Manner. The next Thing you are to be in-

formed of, is the Neceſſity of it; which will ſoon appear.

1. If you Conſider what a Multitude of grievous Sins you ſtand Guilty of, that in Defiance, both of God, and his Commands, have freely permitted whole Legions of evil Thoughts to Harbour in your Imaginations; large Streams of vain and idle Words, and raſh and blaſphemous Oaths to flow from your Hell-ſavouring Mouths; that have profaned the Day, which is wholly to be imployed in God's Service, with vain Delights and ſinful Pleaſures; and polluted thoſe Bodies, which were deſigned for Temples of the Holy Ghoſt, with

1 Cor. 6. 19

with the Works of Darkneſs, both in Publick and Private; and are altogether like thoſe ſenſleſs Perſons, God complains of, which were ingenious in nothing but wickedneſs. *My People is fooliſh, they have not known me, they are ſottiſh Children, and they have no underſtanding; they are wiſe to do Evil, but to do Good they have no knowledge.* Is it not unpleaſant t'ye to employ your thoughts about God and Goodneſs? and do you not take greater Complacency and Satisfuction, in talking of your impious Diverſions and carnal Enjoyments, than in endeavouring to improve your ſelves and others in the Knowledge of the Sacred Laws.

Jer. 4. 22.

Laws of the Moſt High? If you ſay no, I'll call your Practices to come in as Evidences againſt you, and they will ſoon make it out, to your great Diſgrace, that you do. And therefore (whatever your too favourable Opinions of your ſelves may be to the contrary) I muſt tell you, that you are under the Preſſures of a heavy Load of Sins; and have incurred the Diſpleaſure of the Almighty, and highly provoked him to put a Period to your ungodly Lives. And if he ſhould ſend the Meſſenger of Death, (as who knows but he may the very next Minute?) In what a lamentable unreadineſs would you be

be to receive him? How ſadly prepared to appear before the dreadful Throne of the Immortal God whom you have offended? When your Tranſgreſſions of the Divine Precepts have already condemned you, and you ſhall immediately be hurried down, by a Legion of Infernal Spirits, into the devouring Gulph: Where you muſt for ever endure the moſt ſevere Puniſhments, that the malitious Enemy of Mankind can inflict upon you; where your Adulterous Eyes ſhall be terrified with the forced intuition of dreadful Fiends; your Drunken Throats ſhall be filled with the flaming Liquor of the ſulphurous Lake; your

vain

vain Oaths, like ſo many Needles, ſhall always be pricking your Blaſphemous Tongues; your Pernitious Lies, like Vipers, ſhall for ever ſting your moſt tender Nerves; and your Injurious Thefts maintain that Tormenting Fire, which the
Iſa. 30.33. Powerful Breath of the Lord, like a Stream of Brimſtone, ſhall kindle in your Tormented Bodies. And if any one ſhall be ſo ſeverely puniſhed for either of theſe Sins ſingle, how unexpeſſibly great and painful muſt his Puniſhment be, in whom all theſe and many more Sins meet? Theſe Puniſhments are indeed in themſelves very grievous, but the everlaſting duration of them renders

renders them much more grievous; and which is ſtill worſe, there's no Poſſibility of obtaining any Mitigation of 'em: For ſhould you offer up the moſt moving and earneſt Requeſt to God to abate the Severity of 'em, you will hear nothing from him, but a Pain-increaſing Voice, like that of *Abraham* to *Dives*, ſaying, Remember, that you were ruled and guided by the Devil and his wicked Inſtruments, waſting your Days in his vile Slavery, and living according to his Soul-deſtroying Dictates, in continual Obedience to your ſinful Luſts, while you were upon Earth; and therefore you moſt now ſuffer under him, amongſt other *Luk.*16.25.

other ſuch Fools as you were, though in the moſt Impatient Manner. And ſo from Heaven, you hear, there's no Alleviation, but its Contrary, an Aggravation of your Miſeries. And therefore we'll try the laſt Way that there is of endeavouring after it; which is the Recollection of your former ſinful Pleaſures: May not they, being put in the Ballance againſt your Torments, ſomewhat abate the Weight of 'em? No, they'll bring that with them, (I mean the many gratious Calls and Warnings that God gave you to forſake em) which will add much more to their Weight, than they can detract from it.

For

For what can more inflame and heighten your Sufferings, than to think of all thoſe loving and kind Methods, that God made uſe of to prevent your falling under 'em, and that you would none of his Counſel, but deſpiſed all his Reproof, as he himſelf complains under the Character of Wiſdom? What more Grief-exaſperating Noiſe, than to hear the frequent and earneſt Incitements, that Chriſt gave you by his Miniſters to Repentance and the Practical Belief of the Goſpel, that you might have had Forgiveneſs of your Sins, and ſo been capable of receiving everlaſting Glory, always ſounding in your Ears? And what *Prov.* 1. 30.

what more painful than to feel the many Reſolutions, that you in vain made of doing this, ſtill running in your diſquieted Minds and telling of you, now it is too late; that by his cunning Artifices, that always imploys his ſubtile Invention in finding out Ways and Means of deſtroying of you, they became ineffectual, and that the Time of Mercy is now expired, and that you muſt ſtand (tho' with never ſo great Reluctancy) to the Allotment of diſtributive Juſtice which is endleſs Torments? If the unavoidable ſuffering of all this Miſery, without Repentance, be not ſufficient to prove the Neceſſity of it, becauſe it relates to a future State. 2. Take

2. Take notice, that Sin was the Cauſe of all the Calamities that ever you were oppreſſed with. Fools, ſays *David*, becauſe of their Tranſgreſſions, and becauſe of their Iniquities are afflicted. And the Prophet *Jeremiah* with a mournful Voice propoſes the Queſtion; Wherefore does a living Man complain? The holy Spirit replies, for the Puniſhment of his Sins. Whereupon the holy Prophet makes a lamentable Exclamation againſt Sin, as being the only Thing that had occaſion'd all their Miſery; *Wo unto us that we have ſinned.* And ſhould you ſtill continue in your Sins, you muſt expect that your Troubles ſhould ſtill

*Pſ.*107.17.

*Lam.*3.39.

Lam 5:16.

ſtill increaſe: For God ſays by his Servant *Moſes*, that if you walk contrary unto him, and will not hearken unto him, He will bring ſeven times more Plagues upon you, according to your Sins. And when the Meaſure of your Iniquity is full, He'll ſend the Deſtroyer among you, and you ſhall unavoidably periſh, as Chriſt tells you; *Except ye Repent, ye ſhall all likewiſe Periſh*; That is, you ſhall ſuffer the ſame Fate, tho in another Way, that thoſe *Galileans* did, whoſe Blood *Pilate* had mingled with the Sacrifices of the *Jews*; or that they did upon whom the Tower in *Siloam* fell, and ſlew 'em. Obſerve how ſeverely our bleſſed

Levit. 26. 21.

Lu. 13 5..

bleſſed Saviour upbraids the Unrepentance of thoſe Cities, in which moſt of his mighty works were done; *Wo unto thee* Chorazin, *Wo unto the* Bethſaida; *for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in* Tyre *and* Sidon *they would have repented long ago, in Sackcloth and Aſhes. But I ſay unto you, that it ſhall be more tollerable for* Tyre *and* Sidon *in the day of Judgment, than for you. And thou* Capernahum, *which art exalted (through thy great Pride and Haughtineſs) unto Heaven, ſhalt be brought down to Hell; for if the mighty Works, which have been done in thee, had been done in* Sodom, *it would have remained untill this Day.* *Mat.* 11. 21, 22, 23.

And

And hear what terrible Language God ſpeaks in to the impenitent People of *Judah*;

Jer. 4. 4. *Circumciſe your ſelves unto the Lord, and take away the Foreskins of your Heart, ye Men of* Judah, *and Inhabitants of* Jeruſalem, *leſt my fury come forth like Fire, and burn that none can quench it, becauſe of the Evil of your Doings.* And apply it to your ſelves, for it is ſpoken to you, and thoſe which are to come, as well as it was to them. And would you but endeavour to diſpel thoſe thick Miſts of Ignorance and Error, that have dazled the Eyes of your Underſtandings, and obſerve the amazing Strokes of Divine Vengeance upon obſtinate Sinners, you might

might enumerate many, that had not gone ſo far in Impiety, as probably ſome of you have, that have been taken away of a ſuddain, in the height of their Wickedneſs, before they have had time to bethink themſelves of their Evil Ways, till it has been too late.

Neither does the holy Scripture want Inſtances of this Nature, as you may read concerning *Elah*, who was ſlain, as he was drinking himſelf Drunk in the Houſe of his Steward; and is ſet forth among many others in ſacred Writ, as an Example of Admonition t'ye. And what Reaſon can be given, why many of you, that have been ſo often Guilty of the

1 *King.* 16. 8, 9, 10.

the ſame Sin, had not long ere this been deſtroyed in the the like Manner, but God's extraordinary Favor, and ſparing Kindneſs t'ye? Do but take this, together with the perillous Circumſtances you are under, into ſerious Conſideration, and then (unleſs you are reſolved, to your utter Ruine, to try if you can tire the great Patience of the long-ſuffering God, which ſtrives to prevent the Execution of that Juſtice, which would immediately caſt you into the Place of your Deſerts, even the diſmal Region of Eternal Darkneſs) your own Wickedneſs ſhall correct you, and your Back-ſlidings ſhall reprove you, and you ſhall both ſee and

and know, that it is an evil and bitter thing, that you have forſaken the Lord your God, and that his Fear is not in you: And ſo be forced, if you have any regard to your own Happineſs, to take up a fiery Indignation and heavy Diſpleaſure at your ſelves, that you have been Guilty of ſuch intollerable Ingratitude, as to have abuſed ſo great a Mercy, which ſhould have been acknowledged with all poſſible Praiſe and Thankſgiving, ſpeedy Repentance, Amendment of Life, and an earneſt Endeavour to arrive to ſome Perfection of Holineſs in the Fear of God, by a careleſs continuance in Sin and Wickedneſs.

And now ſeeing this is ſo neceſſary a Duty, that without it, you muſt feel the ſad Effects of Sin in this World, and for ever endure moſt ſharp and exquiſite Torments in that which is to come: Let that Divine Counſel, which *Daniel* gave to Wicked *Nebuchadnezzar* be acceptable unto you, and break off your Sins with Righteouſneſs, and your Iniquities by ſhewing Mercy to the Poor, and thoſe that are under Affliction: And that immediately; *Make*, as the Wiſeman ſays, *no tarrying to turn to the Lord, and put not off from Day to Day.* But reſign your ſelves up wholly unto Chriſt. Undergo a Courſe of Converſion, that you may have Salvation.

Dan. 4. 27.

Eccleſiaſtic 5. 7.

vation. Doubt not but Chriſt will receive you, altho your Sins are great and numerous, if you will in Truth and Sincerity come unto him: His Kindneſs towards you is ſo great, that He has not as yet utterly rejected you; but ſtill invites you to come unto him, that he may eaſe you of the Weight of your Sins, and give you Reſt. And *Mat.* 11. 20. God himſelf lovingly tells you, that if you'll amend your wicked Ways, and your evil Doings, and turn unto him, He will have Mercy on you, and Iniquity ſhall not be your Ruin. Don't *Ez.* 18 30. defer the embracing of theſe Gratious Offers any longer, leſt, whilſt you lay bound in your Sins, you are overtaken

by the evil Day, and caſt down with violence into the everlaſting Priſon of utter Darkneſs. Take heed that this be not the diſmal Fate of your unvaluable Souls. The Devil endeavours to deſtroy you. Hell is ready to receive you, and there is but a narrow Space between you and it, and that you may the ſooner fall into it, 'twill be moved from beneath to meet you at your coming, as appears from *Iſa.* 14. 9. where the Prophet told the impious King of *Babylon*, that Hell was moved from beneath to meet him at his Coming. Caſt an Eye down into this horrible Place, before it is moved to near you, and conſider, how unexpreſſibly

expreſſibly painful 'twill be to lie for ever in its furious Flames. Behold what a vaſt number of Sinners are already tormented there for want of due Repentance: Hear how to no Purpoſe, they wiſh for a few of thoſe Hours, that you trifle away in Vanities and ſinful Diverſions, and declare how they would imploy 'em to a better Uſe, that they might eſcape future Vengeance. Mark how in vain they cry for a drop of water to cool their Tongues. Let their everlaſting Miſery be an Admonition t'ye; for if you do not, I muſt needs ſay, that the very Damned in Hell have more Kindneſs for you, then you have for your ſelves; for *Lu.* 16. 24.

they are willing that you ſhould be admoniſhed by one ſent from the Dead, that you might Repent, and ſo eſcape that doleful Place that they are in.

Luk. 16. 27, 28.

Don't abuſe the extraordinary Patience of the Almighty any longer, Who, notwithſtanding your great and manifold Provocations, is ſo averſe to your Deſtruction, that He ſtill ſuſpends it, and ſtrives to be Merciful unto you. Let his great Goodneſs and miraculous Forbearance, be, at length, the happy Means of bringing you to Repentance, and ingaging you to more Diligence and greater Conſtancy in his Service, and not to act, as the Apoſtle forewarns you,

Rom. 2: 4.

you, as Men not knowing that the Goodneſs of God leads to Repentance.

'Tis a ſhameful Thing, that Men ſhould abuſe God's Mercies to Sin; and becauſe Sentence is not ſpeedily executed againſt evil Doers, and they are not immediatly ſtruck Dead for every Offence, they ſhould thereupon take Encouragment to Vice, and careleſly run into all manner of Wickedneſs, and never Conſider, that the longer they abuſe God's ſparing Mercy, the greater their Puniſhment will be. I admire how Men can have ſuch a great Love and Eſtimation for Sin; that no Entreaties, no Perſwaſions will prevail with them to hate it, and forſake it.

Methinks, if the Hopes of that eternal Weight of Glory, which is promiſed to the Godly, are not ſufficient to turn them out of the deſtructive Paths of Wickedneſs; yet the Thoughts of the everlaſting Pains of Hell ſhould.

There are none, I preſume, that can be ſo impious, as to ſay, that ſuch a Turning is not needful, ſeeing 'tis now ſo univerſally acknowledged, that Heaven can't be attain'd without it: Probably ſome may, through the Suggeſtions of their Maſter the Devil, fly to the poor deluded Sinner's common Refuge, and ſay, God is very Merciful, and certainly he'll not exert ſo much Severity,

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as to Condemn ſuch vaſt Multitudes, as are our Equals, if not Superiours in Impiety. But where lies the Strength of this great Argument, that ſo many Drunkards, Thieves, Swearers, Coveteous Perſons, and Adulterers, build all their Hopes of going to Heaven upon? May they not, without incurring the Scandal of any greater Fooliſhneſs ſay, there is no Heaven? The ſame holy Scripture that declares there is ſuch a glorious Kingdom of Infinite Happineſs, declares alſo that they ſhall not inherit it, 1 *Cor.* 6. 9, 10. But if, when you read the Verſes, you do not find the very word Swearers, think not that I have ſpoken more than

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is there, for altho they are not explicitly, yet they are implicitly there, they are implied in the Word Λοίδορος Revilers, and indeed they are the very worſt ſort of 'em, for they revile and reproach even God himſelf, by abuſing his moſt ſacred Name, and violating his Commands. Conſider of this, you that are Guilty of either of theſe heinous Offences, and ſpeedily forſake it; don't fulfil your ſinful Luſts any longer, and ruin your ſelves to all Eternity, by preſuming upon God's Mercy; for altho he is Infinite in Mercy; yet he'll never imploy it in oppoſition to his Truth. So that you may eaſily underſtand,

ſtand, that the continuing in Sin, and ſpeaking peace to your ſelves, and hoping for Mercy, is the ready Way to Deſtruction; 'tis in Effect the making God a Receder from his Word, which is ſuch an Aggravation of a Sin, as will be an Occaſion of the Lord's blotting a Man's Name out from under Heaven, as *Moſes* tells the Children of *Iſrael*, and us in them, Deut. 29. 18, 19, 20. *Leſt there ſhould be amongſt you a Root that bears Gall and Wormwood* (ראש ולענה A poyſonful Herb, or Hemlock and Wormwood) *And it come to paſs when he hears the Words of this Curſe, that he Bleſs himſelf in his Heart, ſaying, I ſhall have Peace,*

Peace, tho I walk in the Imagination (or ſtubbornneſs) *of mine Heart; to add Drunkenneſs to Thirſt;* (הרוה את־הצמאה the Drunken to the Thirſty) *The Lord will not ſpare him, but then the Anger of the Lord and his Jealouſie ſhall ſmoak againſt that Man, and all the Curſes that are written in this Book ſhall lie upon him, and the Lord ſhall blot out his Name from under Heaven.* Meditate a little on this Place, and then let me know what Reaſon you have to continue in Sin, in Expectation of Mercy. There remains but one thing more, that can be a Means of detaining wicked Perſons in their ſinful Courſes; and

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that is the moſt unreaſonable of all, the Hope, that if they do go to Hell, they ſhall have a Multitude of Companions. Oh intollerable Stupidity! Will it be any Eaſe to them, to hear the lamentable Shrieks and piercing Groans of their Fellow-Sinners in Torment? Surely 'twill be much pleaſanter to go to Heaven ſingle, than to Hell with Myriads of miſerable Companions. And therefore don't, I beſeech you, be ſo fooliſhly enſnared by the deceitful Allurements of Sin; for, although it now ſeems pleaſant to your corrupt Natures, 'twill be moſt grievous to your afflicted Souls hereafter. Rather taſt the bit-

bitterneſs of Sin, by a preſent Repentance, than enjoy its ſeeming Sweetneſs, which flatters the Soul to utter Deſtruction. And when its Profits and Pleaſures begin to work upon you, ſtop their Operation, by ſetting againſt them the everlaſting Bliſs they'll deprive you of, and the endleſs Pain and Miſery they'll bring you to. Think frequently with your ſelves, whether any thing may be got by Sin, that is more valuable than Heaven, and worth the enduring the eternal Torments of Hell for its Procurement: Whether the ſeeming Pleaſures of Sin, for a few Days or Years, are more to be eſteemed of, than the never

ceaſing

ceaſing Joys of the Saints, and the moſt dreadful Company of Fiends to be preferred to the moſt pleaſurable Society of Angels, for the Soul-beguiling Fruition of them. And beware of diminiſhing either the Number or Greatneſs of your Sins, and deceiving your ſelves by an imperfect Repentance; for there are ſome, that notwithſtanding in Reality they hate and deſpiſe the Ways of Godlineſs; yet becauſe they can ſeem to be ſorry after the Commiſſion of a Sin, and make uſe of that vulgar Saying, Would to God we had not done it, think themſelves ſincerely Penitent: When the Love of Sin was never throughly

throughly purged off their Souls, and their Hearts brought to a true and unfeigned Abhorrence of it. But their Sorrow ariſes only from a Senſe of the Danger they have run themſelves into; and not from Regeneration and being renewed by the Holy Spirit of the bleſſed Jeſus. The Prophet *Jonah* called but once upon the ſinful *Ninivites*, and they unanimouſly Repented. And will not you when Chriſt ſo often calls? No, not when the All-glorious and Omnipotent God of Heaven and Earth does pray you by his Embaſſadors to be reconciled unto him. Be not, I deſire you, ſo unkind to your Maker, and cruel to

Jonas 3. 5.

2 *Cor.* 5. 20.

to your ſelves, as to let him pray any longer in vain. But be an Occaſion of Joy and Gladneſs in the Preſence of the holy Angels of God, by your Repentance and Reconciliation unto him, ſeeing Chriſt himſelf tells you that they greatly rejoyce at it. And 'tis ſome Satisfaction to your Redeemer alſo for all the Miſery he has ſuffered for you; for then, as the Prophet *Iſaiah* foretold of him, *He ſhall ſee of the Travail of his Soul, and ſhall be ſatisfied.* Imitate that penitent People but now mentioned: And let not this Duty be the Object of your Contempt and Deriſion, when it is ſo powerful and efficatious, that 'twill

*Luk.*15.10.

Iſa. 53. 11.

'twill recommend you to the Favour of Heaven, and be a Means of God's putting all your Wickedneſs out of his Remembrance, as he himſelf promiſes, Ezek. 18. 21, 22. *But if the wicked will turn from all his Sins that he has Committed, and keep all my Statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he ſhall ſurely live, he ſhall not die. All his Tranſgreſſions that he has Commited, they ſhall not be mentioned unto him, in his Righteouſneſs that he hath done, he ſhall live.* But here ſeeing the Promiſe of Forgiveneſs is univerſal, and there is no Sin excepted out of it, a Queſtion may be asked, whether, ſuppoſe any one ſhould

ſhould (which God forbid) be guilty of Blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt, he may, upon his Repentance, be forgiven or no: But ſeeing there is a very great Diverſity of Opinions about this Sin, I will give the beſt Gueſs from Scripture that I can, what it may be, and then I'll anſwer it: It ſeems from the malitious and blaſphemous Expreſſions of the Phariſees, who, when they heard, that our Saviour did not only Heal the Blind, the Lame, and the Dumb, but that he caſt out Devils alſo, and ſo would eſtabliſh his Doctrine, in Deſpight of all their invidious Endeavours to prevent the Eſtabliſhment of it, they ſaid,

Mat. 12. 24. *This Fellow does not caſt out Devils, but by Beelzebub the Prince of the Devils*; (which is a Name of Reproach in the Hebrew Language, and ſignifies no more in Engliſh, than a Governour of thoſe contemptible Creatures the Flies) to whom this Sin was pronounced unpardonable, to be this; An upbraiding of Chriſt's Doctrine, and objecting that thoſe miraculous Works, which he did ſo frequently do in Confirmation of it, were not done by any Power derived from Heaven, but by the Aſſiſtance of Infernal Spirits, that is, by a Power derived from Hell: And now this I ſay in Anſwer to the Queſtion already propoſed, that

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if any one ſhall once become ſo prodigiouſly wicked as to do this, he deſtroys all his Intereſt in Chriſt, through whom, upon his Repentance, he ſhould have the Remiſſion of his Sins; and then I can not ſee how he ſhould expect to have this or any other Sin forgiven, either in this World, or that which is to come, had not Chriſt told him he ſhould not. *Mat.12.32.* Nor does this, in the leaſt, deny the Truth of the Promiſe but now quoted t'ye out of *Ezekiel*, becauſe it was made before this Sin was pronounced unpardonable. Neither does it at all abate the Strength and Energy of Repentance, ſeeing he that commits it, puts himſelf

himſelf under an Impoſſibility of Repenting, as the Apoſtle declares, Heb. 6. 4, 5, 6. *For it is impoſſible for thoſe who were once Enlightned, and have taſted of the heavenly Gift, and were made Partakers of the Holy Ghoſt; And have taſted the good Word of God, and the Powers of the World to come: If they fall away to renew them again unto Repentance; ſeeing they crucifie to themſelves the Son of God afreſh, and put him to an open ſhame.* And he repreſents unto 'em the grievous Puniſhment, that ſhall be inflicted upon 'em for ſo doing, in the two following Verſes, by a very lively ſimilitude drawn from the Earth; where he ſays, *that-*

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the Earth which drinks in the Rain that comes oft upon it, and brings forth Herbs meet for them by whom it is dreſſed, receives Bleſſing from God. But that which bears Thorns and Briers, is rejected, and is nigh unto Curſing, whoſe End is to be burned. There is not any Text of Scripture that ſpeaks the leaſt in Favour of him, that is guilty of this Sin: I thought indeed, at firſt reading of the 29th Verſe of the 3d Chapter of St. *Mark*, that there might have been an Inference drawn from thence, which would in ſome meaſure, have prevented his utter Deſperation, and a ceaſing totally both in himſelf and others, on his behalf,

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to endeavour after Mercy; becauſe the Engliſh Verſion ſeems to imply, by ſaying, *That he is only in Danger of eternal Damnation*, that there is ſome Hope of his obtaining Mercy: But the Original, Ἔνοχός ἐστιν αἰωνίου κρίσεως will not admit of any ſuch Thing, but poſitively ſays, *that he is Guilty of or bound to eternal Damnation.* In ſhort, to what End is it for us (unleſs it be to ſhew our Folly and our Sin) to Fancy that he ſhall have Mercy, and be forgiven, when the Holy Jeſus, who can not Ly, ſays he ſhall not. But I hope none of you are guilty of this Sin, (and I ſincerely wiſh you never may) and ſo nothing but want of Repentance,

pentance, can hinder you of the enjoyment of everlasting Felicity. And therefore be pleased to make a serious Reflection upon these Perswasive Arguments, that have been used t'ye, and not cast 'em away, as useless and impertinent, with such Indignative Expressions as these; What need was there of so prolix a Discourse upon Repentance? What, does he think we do not Repent? I more than think so, I know you dont; because you do not obey our Saviour's Command, *and bring forth Fruits meet for Repentance.* But presuming you'll study your own Good so far, as to betake your selves to a

Mat. 3. 8.

careful and continual Performance of it, for the Future: I ſhall now mention thoſe Things that are to accompany it.

And the firſt is Faſting, as being the only proper means of preventing that inordinate Concupiſcence of the Fleſh, which would inevitably ariſe from a too liberal indulgence of your craving Appetites, and indiſpoſe the Mind for the ready and exact Performance of it. But methinks I hear the Voluptuary ſay, I hope if I can abſtain from Sin, that may ſuffice, I need not deny kind Nature its uſual Suſtenance, or at moſt I need but abſtain from ſome particular

Sorts

Sorts of Diet; but God will not take ſuch ſenſleſs Excuſes as theſe; and therefore I ſay unto him, as our Saviour ſaid to the Phariſees, upon another Occaſion, *that this he ought to do, and not to leave the other undone*; both muſt be done. And is it not moſt reaſonable, that we that have been ſo often Guilty of Exceſs, ſhould ſometimes afflict our ſelves with Abſtinence, to Atteſt our unfeigned Sorrow and Contrition for it? For how a Man can properly be ſaid to Sorrow, after a godly Manner, for his Sins, when he takes his bodily Refreſhments, as at other times, I cannot ſee; in worldly

Sorrow, I am ſure, 'tis often otherwiſe; and yet ſo great is the Difference between theſe two Sorts of Sorrow, if you'll take the Apoſtle's Word for it, that the former works Repentance to Salvation, when the latter works Death, 2 *Cor.* 7. 10. For godly Sorrow works Repentance to Salvation, not to be repented of, but the Sorrow of the World works Death. And here underſtand that by Death in this Place, is not only meant the Separation of Soul and Body, for that Death all muſt undergo, as well the Penitent as the Impenitent; but the caſting into the Lake, which burns with Fire and Brimſtone,

ſtone, alſo, which in Reſpect of that, is cal'ed Δεύτερος Θάνατος the ſecond Death. But what do I thus talk of the reaſonableneſs of a Thing, that is abſolutely neceſſary; when God himſelf ſtrictly Commands it, Joel 2. 8. *Turn ye even to me with all your Hearts, and with Weeping, and with Faſting, and with Mourning.* Neither may any One object, and ſay, that altho it was neceſſary under the Law; yet it is not ſo under the Goſpel: For certainly, if it had not, the Apoſtles would never have uſed it, as 'tis manifeſt they did, when they ſeparated *Barnabas* and *Saul* for the Work whereunto God

Rev. 21. 8.

had call'd them (which was the Propagation of the Goſpel) *Act.* 13. 3. where 'tis ſaid that *they Faſted and Prayed.* Whence we may take notice that Faſting is not only neceſſary at a Time of Repentance; but alſo when we Pray unto God to beſtow any great Bleſſing upon us, or return Thanks unto him, for any extraordinary Deliverance, He has been gratiouſly pleaſed to Signalize unto us. And ſo eſtimable a Thing this Faſting was in our Saviour's Time, that it made *Anna*, the aged Propheteſs, with her other Good Services to God, worthy a Tranſmiſſion to ſucceeding Ages, by an

an Evangelical Pen: And Christ has promiſed a Reward to all thoſe that do it ſincerely, and not more to gain the Praiſe of Men, than to pleaſe God. And 'tis a very hard Caſe, and we muſt ſhew a great deal of horrible Ingratitude, if we can't afford to Faſt now and then a Day for his ſake, who Faſted almoſt ſix Weeks for ours. And moreover there are ſome Sins like ſome Sort of Devils that go not forth but by Faſting and Prayer.

Luk. 2. 26 27.

Mat. 6. 17.

Mat. 4. 2.

Mat. 17. 21.

The ſecond thing that ought to accompany your Repentance, is an earneſt and fervent Praying to God, that he would ſend into your Hearts the Glorious Spirit of

Holineſs, that you may be able, after you have turn'd out the Devil and his pernitious Retinue (I mean your Sins) through his Aſſiſtance, to keep him forth, otherwiſe he will ſoon re-enter, and take Poſſeſſion of them again, and then your Condition will be like his our Saviour ſpeaks of, whoſe laſt State was worſe than his firſt. *Mat. 12. 45.*

But the laſt and chiefeſt Thing is the Belief of the Goſpel; and what that is, I come now in Order to inform you, that you may be the better able to Judge, whether you Believe it a-right or no. 'Tis not barely to Believe that whatſoever is contain'd in it, is true; but in

in ſuch a manner, as may be anſwerable to the Deſign of it, that is, the reforming of our Lives, and making our Converſations ſuch, as may become the Goſpel of Chriſt, that we may be able to ſtrive earneſtly together for the Faith of it, under the moſt ſevere Perſecutions, and be as the Apoſtle adviſes the *Philippians* in nothing terrified by our Adverſaries, which is to them an evident Token of Perdition; but to us of Salvation, and that of God. For the believing of the bleſſed Doctrine of the Goſpel only Hiſtorically, or Speculatively, without putting of it in Practice, is but what the Infernal Fiends do; they have an Hiſtorical Faith alſo,

Phil. 1. 28.

alſo, Jam. 2. 19. *Thou believeſt that there is one God, thou doſt well, the Devils alſo Believe and Tremble.* So that we may plainly ſee that they are not ſo devoid of Reaſon, as we are; for they are poſſeſſed with Fear and Trembling, as being conſcious to themſelves, that this Faith will never ſtand them in any Stead; when (alas!) we continue careleſs and fearleſs in no wiſe ſuſpecting the Validity of our Faith, tho' we have ſcarce any Goſpel-Obedience to aſſure us of it. And therefore we might do well to have ſome Recourſe to St. *James's* Doctrine, *Ch.* 2. 26. where he ſays, *that as the body without the Spirit is dead, ſo Faith without works*

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is dead alſo. Faith muſt be perfected by Works, as the ſame Apoſtle, ſpeaking of *Abraham*'s offering his Son *Iſaac* upon the Altar, ſays, Chap. 2. 22. *Seeſt thou how Faith wrought with his Works, and by Works was Faith made perfect.* For ſeeing he would have ſacrificed his only Son, according to God's Command, had it not been the Pleaſure of the Almighty to have given him a Prohibition, He took it as if he had. And hence was his Faith imputed to him for Righteouſneſs, and a Bleſſing promiſed to him and his Seed, becauſe he obey'd the voice of the Lord. And our Faith ſhall be imputed to us alſo for Righteouſneſs, if we Believe *Gen.* 22. 18.

Believe and Obey him, that has raiſed Chriſt Jeſus from
Rom. 4 24. the Dead. And here obſerve the extraordinary Love of God towards us, who ſeeing we have no inherent Righteouſneſs to recommend us unto him, upon our Faith and Obedience, imputes Chriſt's Righteouſneſs unto us, and through the ſame makes it ours, that whereas we can not in our ſelves, we might in him be made the Righteouſneſs of
2 *Cor.* 5. 21. God.

And therefore, whenſoever you read in Scripture of any one's being ſaved by Faith, always underſtand it of ſuch a Faith, as brings forth Obedience, and is attended with its neceſſary Fruit

Fruit Good Works. For altho' they are not in themſelves meritorious, as not being the Reſult of our Natural Faculties and Powers, but the Effect of the Divine Grace operating within us, and aſſiſting of us; Yet they are included in the Goſpel-Covenant, and we are Created unto 'em, Eph. 2. 10. *For we are his Workmanſhip, created in Chriſt Jeſus unto Good Works, which God has before ordain'd that we ſhould walk in them.* And 'tis the very End of the Scripture to make us perfect, and furniſh us unto them. All Scripture is given by Inſpiration of God, and is Profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction,

for

2 Tim. 3. 16, 17. for Inſtruction in Righteouſneſs, that the Man of God may be perfect, throughly furniſhed unto all good Works. And hereupon St. *Paul* when he directed *Titus*, both concerning thoſe Things he ſhould teach, and not teach the *Cretians*, gave him a ſtrict command to ſtir up thoſe that had believed in God to be careful to maintain Good Works, in theſe Words; *This is a faithful Saying, and theſe Things I will that you affirm conſtantly, that they which have Believed in God might be careful to maintain Good Works;* Tit. 3. 8. *theſe things are good and profitable unto Men.* And when he inſtructed *Timothy* whereof

whereof to admoniſh the Rich, he bid him Charge them to be Rich in Good Works, as the ſureſt Way to everlaſting Life; The Mandate at large runs thus; *Charge them that are Rich in this World, that they be not high-minded, nor Truſt in uncertain Riches, but in the living God, who gives us all Things richly to enjoy. That they do Good, that they be Rich in Good Works, ready to diſtribute, willing to communicate, laying up in Store for themſelves a Good Foundation againſt the Time to come, that they may lay hold on Eternal Life.* 1 *Tim.* 6. 17, 18, 19

And ſurely 'tis a moſt ſtrange Deluſion that thoſe Perſons are under, that ſet

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ſo light by Works, as if they could be ſaved without them, when they can not be Juſtified without them, *Jam.* 2. 24. *Ye ſee then how that by Works a man is Juſtified, and not by Faith only.* But how comes it to paſs, you'll ſay then, that St. *Paul* concludes, Rom. 3. 28. *That a man is Juſtified by Faith, without the Deeds of the Law*; The Apoſtles ſeem to contradict each other's Doctrine?

And indeed to an unconſidering Reader they do ſo: And therefore I ſhall take an Occaſion to reconcile them, by conſidering the different Nature of thoſe Works, that the One excludes

cludes and that the other requires; And proving from the Reaſon, that forced St. *James* to make uſe of that Expreſſion, that he was ſo far from contradicting the Doctrine of his Fellow-Apoſtle, that he intended only to render it more clear and Conſpicuous.

The Works that St. *Paul* excludes, are thoſe that were only uſeful under the Law, and ſuch as the Phariſiaical Party perform'd by their Natural Abilities, a litle improved by a Liberal Education, and were ſo highly conceited of, that they vainly imagin'd, as it were by a kind of ſuper-eminently pious Invaſion, to gain Heaven by them; which

which was an Opinion grounded in an exact contrariety to the Doctrine of the Prophet *Hoſea*, who
Hoſ. 20.12. bid them ſow to themſelves in Righteouſneſs, but Reap in Mercy. Whence they might have eaſily learnt, that, altho' righteous Works, as indeed theirs were not, were neceſſary to prepare them for Salvation; yet 'twas Mercy muſt ſave them. And certainly the ſame Doctrine holds good amongſt us, that are under the Goſpel-Diſpenſation, we muſt exerciſe our ſelves continually in the Words of God's Law, and the Works of his Commands, and ariſe to as high a Degree

gree of Righteouſneſs, as poſſibly we can; yet we muſt not be puffed up with the vain Glory of Merit, and think that God is indebted to us, and that we have obliged him to give us a Place among the Bleſſed: For he is a Debter to no Man, as Chriſt plainly ſhews by the Similitude of the Labourers in the Vineyard; *Mat.* 20. from the firſt to the ſeventeenth verſe: But after we have uſed our utmoſt Diligence in the Diſcharge of our Duty, acknowledge our ſelves, according to our Bleſſed Saviour's Advice, to be but unprofitable Servants; and throw our ſelves wholly, in the Way of Righ- *Lu.* 14. 10.

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teouſneſs, upon the tender Mercies of God, and the Saving Merit and Satisfaction of our Glorified Redeemer.

And now thoſe Works St. *James* requires, are of a quite different Stamp, (to wit) ſincere Obedience to Chriſt and his Commands, and uninterrupted Actions of Good Life, and Chriſtian-like Converſation. But before we proceed any farther, the Reaſon of this Aſſertion of St. *James* declaring Works to be neceſſary to Juſtification, as well as Faith, from whence our Proof muſt ariſe is to be enquired after; And it ſeems to have been this;

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An earneſt Deſire of ſuppreſſing that pernitious Doctrine, that ſome ill Men, which I think we may call, from their impious Leader the *Simonites*, had raiſed from this wilfully miſinterpreted Expreſſion of St. *Paul* concerning Faith; from which by a fallacious way of Arguing (to which they were to their own, as well as others Hurt, very much accuſtomed) they readily proved, that if a Man did but Believe the Truth of the Goſpel, he might be ſure, whatever his Life was, of the Love of God and Eternal Happineſs: And ſuch wonderful Succeſs had they in theſe Luſt-befriending Aſſertions, that Impiety

ty broke forth, like a bankleſs Stream, and menaced the Deſtruction of Multitudes of thoſe, that were newly converted to Chriſtianity. And ſhould St. *James* behold all this, as an unconcerned Spectator, and hear the Salutiferous Sayings of his Friend (who was not now preſent to vindicate himſelf, as he did from the malitious Imputations of thoſe evil minded Perſons that falſly declared him to ſay, that they might Sin, that Grace might abound, as may be gathered from *Rom.* 6. 1, 2.) through the falſe and invidious Expoſition of a Satanical Crew, made an Encouragement to Sin? No, he immediately,

ately, under a pious indignation, enters the Liſt with theſe unhappy Enemies of the Truth, and declares that the true meaning of thoſe ſacred Words of St. *Paul*, that they ſo ſtifly endeavoured, to their eternal Shame and Reproach, to conceal, was this; that their Faith muſt be attended by Evangelical or Goſpel-Works, tho' not by thoſe Works, which were required of the Jews, under the Law-Diſpenſation; or ſuch as the proud Phariſees did Perform, upon a falſe Suppoſition of their being Meritorious; and that he did himſelf affirm the ſame, and expreſſed his Affirmation in ſuch Language, as might

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be free from all manner of Ambiguity or Doubtfulneſs: And then committed it to Writing, that there might be no Grounds left for ſuch wicked Perſons, as are apt to put ſuch a ſenſe upon any dubious ſentence of Scripture, as may ſeem moſt to tollerate their Prophane and Ungodly Courſes, of raiſing ſuch deſtructive Doctrines in future Ages. Whence it's highly apparent, that they both drove at the ſame point, (that is) A ſteadfaſt Belief, and diligent performance of all thoſe holy Works, which are required of us in the Goſpel; and that the latter did but explain the former to render

der him more Intelligable, and make it appear that, beyond all Doubt, Faith and Works muſt be united, to Juſtifie us, through the Merits of Chriſt, and procure Salvation, which neither of them alone can do, Jam. 2. 14. *What does it profit, my Brethren, tho a Man ſay he has Faith, and have not Works? can Faith ſave him?* How can a dead thing, as you have already heard Faith is, unleſs it be quickned and made alive by Works, bring a Man to everlaſting Life?

But what will the Faith-Advocates, if any ſuch there are, that hear this Reconciliation of the Apoſtles, ſay? That 'tis very tedious, and

runs too much upon Supposition; and that it might much better, and in fewer Words been made, by using a Distinction, and saying, that the One speaks in Reference to Justification before God, the other to Justification before Men: And their Reason, if I may so call it, I suppose, is this, Because they can infer a Proposition from hence, that's very consonant to their Good Works-abhorring Dispositon, and serves to satisfie them, through their great Willingness to have it so, that they may be Justified before God, tho' they can not before Men, without Works: But their Proposition

tion is false and will deceive them; for the only Thing that can properly be inferr'd from hence, is this; that that Faith which Justifies not it self by Good Works before mortal Men, can never Justifie any one before the Immortal God. And then, were they not as good allow of the other Way of reconciling of them, as of this?

But is there any Thing more that these conceitedly Wise Men, which are so unwilling to Renounce their Errors, can say in the Defence of them? Yes, they will tell you that they do not Justifie causatively, but only declara-

tively. And what then, is a Declarative Juſtification no Juſtification? And now I can not but take Notice in this Place of the great Indiſcretion of ſome People, that will affirm, that a Man may be Juſtified without Works, and yet acknowledge, that he can not be ſaved without them. But to what end ſhould a Man be Juſtified, if he cannot be Saved? Would they have him Juſtified (I ſpeak with Horror) in Order to be Damned? For if he cannot be Saved without them (as they themſelves acknowledge) he muſt be Damned if he has them not.

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There is no middle State, as ſome Perſons of a Fraudulent Ingenuity, have inferr'd from a deſignedly miſtaken Text of Scripture, 1 *Cor.* 3. 15. where the Apoſtle ſpeaking of the Manner of trying every Mans Work, of what Sort it is, which is by Fire, ſays, *If any Mans work ſhall be burnt, he ſhall ſuffer Loſs; but he himſelf ſhall be Saved*; οὕτως δὲ ὡς διὰ πυρός *yet ſo, as by Fire*, which is a Phraſe by which the *Greeks* uſe to expreſs any Thing, that cannot be done without great Difficulty: So that the true meaning of this Place is that he ſhall ſcarcely and ,not without great

Difficulty be Saved. And the very ſuppoſing that there is a neceſſity of ſuch a State and Place, in which Men muſt undergo a Courſe of Purification, before they can be admitted into the Kingdom of Heaven, is not only groundleſs and abſurd, but damnable: For it argues an Inſufficiency in our Saviour's Blood to purifie us from our Sins; when 'tis that alone that Cleanſes all thoſe, to whom it ſhall be applied, that is, all Penitent and true Believers that walk in the Light, from all Sin: 1 John. 1. 7. *But if we walk in the Light, as he is in the Light, we have Fellowſhip one with another,*

another, and the Blood of Jeſus Chriſt his Son cleanſes us from all Sin. And pray tell me now what need there is of paſſing through a Purgation-Office.

Truly workleſs Believers are liable to the ſame Reproof, that our Saviour gave his unpractiſing Hearers, Luk. 6. 46. *Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I ſay?* And are in as great Danger, as they are, of falling in the evil Day of Temptation, like a Houſe built upon the Surface of the Earth, without any Foundation. For I cannot ſee how an Armour of Faith, that is not lined with the Obedience of Goſ-

pel-Works, which are the only good Works, can be Proof againſt the fiery Darts of the Devil, when it is not a true and ſincere Faith; for that implies Goſpel-Obedience, as the Apoſtle intimates in his Expoſition of a Saying of the Prophet *Iſaiah*, Rom. 10. 16 *But they have not all Obey'd the Goſpel; for Eſaias ſays, Lord, who has Believed our Report?* Whence we inform our ſelves, that we can not properly be ſaid to Believe in God, unleſs we obey his Commands, neither can we be ſaved (whatever our hopes may be to the contrary) without it, ſeeing Chriſt is the Author

thor of Salvation to none but thoſe that obey him. *Heb.* 5. 9. And certainly, whatever ſome may vainly imagin, there is no Salvation in any other: For there's none other Name under Heaven given amongſt Men, whereby we muſt be ſaved, *Act.* 4. 12. That Faith indeed which ſprings not forth into Action, is like that Knowledge, our Saviour ſpeaks of, which being unaccompany'd with Doing, ſerves only to increaſe any one's puniſhment. *Luk.* 11. 47. For God acts according to the Rule of perfect Juſtice, and where much he gives, much he requires; the more Mercies he beſtows, the more

Service and Works of Obedience he expects: And then be ſure he muſt expect more from us of this Kingdom, than from others; ſeeing his Mercies have not appear'd, in ſo great Abundance, to any People or Nation upon the face of the whole Earth, as to us, from whom the irradiant Sun of the Goſpel has never totally withdrawn (notwithſtanding our many ſhameful Abuſes of it) its benign Influence. And if we did but live in ſuch a Regular and Godly Sort, as we ought, under ſuch extraordinary Favours as theſe, how Happy might we be, in Reſpect of what we are, both as to our Preſent

ſent and Future Being? But ſuch is our great and intolerable Imprudence, that there are too many amongſt us, 'tis much to be fear'd, will bring themſelves into endleſs Miſery, by hoping, becauſe 'tis ſaid, that Chriſt came into the World to ſave Sinners, that they ſhall be ſaved, whether they Repent and practically Believe the holy Goſpel, or no: But let them conſider that the Promiſe of Salvation is Conditional, and this is the Condition, to Repent and Believe the Goſpel, the which if they perform, the Promiſe is theirs; otherwiſe they can claim no Title to it; for the ſame bleſſed Jeſus, that

1 *Tim.* 1. 15.

that has ſaid they ſhall be Saved, if they do Perform it, has ſaid alſo that they ſhall be Damned, if they do not Perform it.

Mark 16. 16.

And therefore to Encourage you to a more diligent Performance of the Condition, I ſhall now ſpeak ſomething of the Nature of the Promiſe. 'Tis an Aſſurance of Admiſſion into that everlaſting Kingdom, where you ſhall immediately enjoy the Preſence of the All-Glorious God, and have ſuch a clear Sight and certain Knowledge of his Infinite Perfections, that you ſhall ſee and know him as He is. And have the Soul tran-

1 John 3. 2.

tranſporting Love of God, and Jeſus Chriſt, ſo plentifully circumfuſed about you, as ſhall make you in the very Height of Celeſtial Joy and Gladneſs, pour forth continual Hallelujahs, and Expreſſions of Thankfulneſs. And, which ſhall greatly add to your Delight, the Angels, thoſe bleſſed Choriſters, ſhall always joyn with you in this Divine Exerciſe of ſinging choice Anthems of Praiſe before the Glorious Throne of God. Oh! What an incomparable Happineſs 'twill be, to be where your Bleſſed Saviour is, and always behold the Orient Brightneſs of his Countenance, that, as

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Rev. 21. 23. an Eternal Sun, enlightens the whole Heavens? How grateful to Savour that rare Perfume, that comes from his Royal Garments, when Pſ. 45. 8. they ſmell of Myrrhe, and Aloes, and Caſſia? How Joyful to Hear the ſweet Harmony of the Triumphant Hoſt of Heaven ſtill glorifying God? How pleaſant to be always bathing your ſelves in the pure and delightſom Fountain of Glory, whoſe Sacred Water ſends forth a more fragrant Scent, then the ſo highly eſteem'd Wine of *Lebanon*, and to be made to Drink of the River of God's Pleaſures?

Pſ. 36. 8. And now what are all the

the Pleaſures of this Sublunary World, that many Men, for want of due Conſideration, prefer to theſe, compar'd to them? They are ſhort and uncertain, but theſe are certain and Eternal: For the moſt Juſt God will be the Reward of his diligent and faithful Servants, and their Joys in him ſhall never ceaſe, but they ſhall be ſo Glorious, that they ſhall for ever Shine, as Chriſt has declared, like the Sun in the Kingdom of their Father. *Mat.* 13. 43. Theſe and many more, which are far above the Reach of our weak Apprehenſions, are the everlaſting Pleaſures, that the King-

Kingdom of God will afford to you, if by true Faith and ſincere Repentance, you make good your Title to the Promiſe of Salvation. Who would not, for the Enjoyment of them, let his whole Life be a continued Courſe of Repentance, and always be labouring to perfect his Belief of the Goſpel, by earneſtly endeavouring to put in practice, what is there requir'd of him?

And thus have I ſet before you Everlaſting Pleaſures, and Endleſs Pains, with the Means of obtaining the one, and avoiding the other: Weigh well the vaſt difference that there is between

between them, and then make your Choice. But be not, I entreat you in Chriſt's Name, ſo imprudent, as for the Enjoyment of the momentary Pleaſures of Sin, which are lighter than Vanity it ſelf, to chooſe Everlaſting Burnings, rather than that Glorious Kingdom, wherein is Fulneſs of Joy to all Eternity.

Stir up, O Lord, we beſeech thee, our dull and Impenitent Spirits, and give us Grace to betake our ſelves to the careful and continual Performance of every Sacred Duty, and always to Augment our Repentance to Particular Sins,

Sins, and ſtill grow into a deeper Hatred and Loathing of them, and endeavour, with an increaſing Earneſtneſs, to cleanſe our ſelves from the Pollutions both of Soul and Body, and arrive to as high a Degree of Holineſs, as is poſſible for us, and ſo pleaſantly Swim down the Stream of faithful Obedience, into the unlimited Ocean of thoſe Immenſe Delights, which thou haſt moſt Gratiouſly Promiſed, as an Everlaſting Reward of Piety: Even for his ſake, who has made the Means of our Salvation ſo eaſy, Chriſt Jeſus the Righteous:

teous: To whom with thee, O Bleſſed Father, and thy Holy Spirit be all Honour and Glory, Dominion and Power, now and for evermore, Amen.

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TO THE

Vain-Swearing Tribe.

AMongſt all the vile Sinners in the World, there are none ſo devoid of Reaſon, as you that profane God's Holy Name by Swear-

Swearing. What End d'ye propoſe to your ſelves in it? 'Tis a Sin that has none of thoſe enticing Objects, that other Sins have, 'tis neither profitable nor pleaſurable: And therefore, aſſure your ſelves, it muſt be the more offenſive, to the All-wiſe Creator of the World, and by Conſequence the more Dangerous. For what greater Indignity or Affront can you offer to the Almighty? And what greater Danger can you bring your ſelves into? Is it a light Thing, d'ye think, to abuſe that tremendous Name that makes the whole Univerſe to ſhake, and can in a Moment overwhelm it in the Inſa-

Inſatiable Gulph of Deſtruction, that Sacred Name, in which the Glorious Hoſts of Heaven do ſtill rejoyce, and which is the very Centre of all true Happineſs? Will you ruin your ſelves, both Soul and Body, by uſing this Helliſh Language, for no other End, but meerly to Pleaſure the Devil? What reſign them up freely, without receiving any Thing in Lieu of them? One would think it was almoſt impoſſible for People to be Guilty of ſo much Folly and Madneſs, did not daily Experience declare the Contrary. But this is the moſt admirable Thing, to ſee their great

great Unwillingneſs to be brought to know their Error, and forſake it. They'll rather Believe the Devil, and their own ſinful Hearts, that tell 'em 'tis but a Common Failing, or at moſt, but a ſmall Vice, and very Creditable, and ſuch an one as will eaſily be Pardon'd; than they will God's Holy Word, which expreſly ſays, *Deut.* 5. 11. That he will not hold him Guiltleſs, that takes his Holy Name in vain. And the giving a Reaſon here, why we ſhould not Tranſgreſs this Commandment, and not in the others alſo, ſeems to imply, that God is more offended at the Violation of this,

this, than any of the reſt. But here you'll ſay, What, God more offended for a little Curſing and Swearing, than for that Crying Sin of Murder, which is here alſo forbidden, and for which no Puniſhment lighter than Death it ſelf is Sufficient? Where did ever God Command any one to be put to Death for Curſing or Swearing? I anſwer from Levit. 24. 13, 14. *And the Lord ſpake* (or gave Command) *unto Moſes, ſaying; Bring forth him that has Curſed, without the Camp, and let all that heard him, lay their Hands upon his Head, and let all the Congregation ſtone*

him. Which I take to be one of the moſt ſevere Ways of putting any one to Death. This truly is the Dreadful Sin that ſeems to March in the Front of that vaſt Army of Sins, that have provoked God to ſend the Spirit of Confuſion amongſt us; which greatly diſturbs the Peace and Tranquility both of Church and State. And 'twill be in vain for us, unleſs we amend our Lives, to Hope to avert it by the Force of our Arms, and endeavouring each other's Defamation. Wherefore, I conjure you, as you regard the Publick Good, and tender your own Pretious

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and Immortal Souls, forthwith to forſake it, and make it a Means, by throughly conſidering the Folly of it, of bringing you out of Love with other Sins alſo. Why will you make all Chriſt's loving and kind Interceſſions for a Deliverance out of all our Troubles, void and of none Effect, and not only force God to complain, as the Subborn Iſraelites did, *Iſa.* 52. 5. that his Holy Name is Blaſphemed among the Heathen, or the Gentiles, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks in Alluſion to this Place, *Rom.* 2. 24. through you, but that you your ſelves Blaſ-

pheme him alſo? 'Tis ſtrange Men ſhould be ſo groſly imprudent, as to loſe that *Soul-reviving* Character of being innocent, and fill their Houſes with continual Calamities, and give themſelves that Antichriſtian Mark mentioned, *Rev.* 13. 1. which is that horrible Name of *Blaſphemy*, by abuſing the Name of the moſt high God; when they are told in the 14th Chap. of the ſame Book, at the 9th, 10th and 11th Verſes, *That all they that have that Mark, ſhall drink of the Wine of the Wrath of God, which is poured out without Mixture into the Cup of his*

his Indignation, and be tormented with Fire and Brimſtone in the Preſence of the Holy Angels, and in the Preſence of the Lamb, and that the Smoke of their Torment aſcends up for ever and ever. But 'tis like you'll be apt to imagine, from your not underſtanding the true meaning of the Word Blaſphemy, that you may Swear, and yet not render your ſelves Guilty of it, and ſo be free from that Mark, and need not fear feeling the woful Conſequence of it: And therefore I'll give you the true and genuine Senſe of the Word, and you ſhall plainly ſee that you cannot.

The Word comes ἀπὸ τὸ βλάπτειν τὴν φήμην, which ſignifies any thing that wounds, or hurts, or is any ways derogatory to the Greatneſs and Majeſty of Heaven: And the Hebrew Word נאצה by which it is expreſſed, 2 *Kings* 19. 3. and in many other Places of the Old Teſtament, ſignifies a deſpiſing and reproachful Provocation of the Almighty. And now, does it not diminiſh, and derogate from the Greatneſs of God, and is it not a great Deſpiſing of him, and a high Provocation to him, to have his Commandments broken, and hear his Name, which is great,

great, wonderful, and holy, call'd upon and profaned in every trivial, nay oftentimes ſinful Diſcourſe?

You muſt needs confeſs it does, and ſo acknowledge it to be Blaſphemy, as you hear from the expoſition of the Word, and immediately give it off, unleſs you'll act contrary to the very Light of Nature, and the expreſs Command of St. *James*, amongſt many others, which the diligent Reading of God's Word will acquaint you with, in his *5th. Chap.* at the *12th. ver.* where he ſays, *But above all Things, my Brethren, Swear not, neither by*

Heaven, neither by the Earth, neither by any other Oath, but let your yea be yea, and your nay nay, leſt you fall into Condemnation. But here beware of falling into the Error of thoſe, that unadviſedly infer from hence, becauſe the Apoſtle ſays, Swear not, and our Bleſſed Saviour ſays, Mat. 5. 34. *Swear not at all*, that 'tis not lawful to Swear before a Magiſtrate, if you are legally required to do it towards the Deciſion of any Controverſie; or to ingage your ſelves to the Performance of any Thing, that may juſtly be required of you. For 'tis only

thoſe

thoſe vain Oaths, that you imprudently uſe, to the great Diſhonour of God, and the unſpeakable Injury of your own Souls, in your ordinary Diſcourſes, that are forbidden in both theſe Places. For that 'tis lawful to Swear towards the putting an End to Striſe and Contention, may be proved from *Heb.* 6. 16. *For verily Men Swear by the Greater, and an Oath for Confirmation is to them an End of all Striſe.* And that we may ingage our ſelves by Oath to the Performance of that, which may lawfully be required of us, I prove by this Reaſon, becauſe

God Swears ſo himſelf, at the 13*th. ver.* of the ſame *Chap. For when God made Promiſe to Abraham, becauſe he could Swear by no Greater, he Sware by himſelf.* And this is his Oath חי־אני in *Hebrew*, in *Engliſh*, *as I live*, Ez. 33. 11. And what ſtronger Confirmation can we have of the Lawfulneſs of a Thing, than God's own Example? But what Reaſons you can have to continue in this vain-Swearing Humor, I have hitherto been diſſwading you from, I can not imagine, unleſs it be, becauſe 'tis grown faſhionary among the ſelf-deſtroying People of this ſinful

ſinful Age; or becauſe you think it gives a Grace and Luſtre to your Diſcourſe, and that there are no Flowers of Eloquence like thoſe that are pluck'd off the poiſonful Weeds, that ſpring forth, of the Noiſom Sinks of Hell. But if theſe are your Reaſons, and you will for an impious Faſhion's ſake, and to be accounted Eloquent Daring Sparks, be amongſt the Number of the Wicked which are reſerved unto the Day of Deſtruction, aſſure your ſelves, you ſhall be turn'd with them into Hell, where your Heaven-defying Language ſhall end in Everlaſting

laſting Howling. For whilſt Oaths are in your Mouths, the Spirit of Chriſt can not be in your Hearts, out of whoſe Abundance the Mouth ſpeaks, and then you are under the Power of the Devil, and if you ſo continue muſt inevitably be Damned, ſeeing Chriſt will not Save you, or have any Thing to do with you, as being none of his, Rom. 8. 9. *Now if any man have not the Spirit of Chriſt* (as you hear the Swearers have not) *he is none of his.* And then whoſe he muſt be I leave you to Judge. Think often what a dreadful Time it will be t'ye, when

when Chriſt ſhall come in flaming Fire to execute Judgment upon all, and to convince all that are Ungodly among them, of all their ungodly Deeds, which they have committed, and of all their hard Speeches, which they have ſpoken againſt him, and Pronounce that irrevocable Sentence, Mat. 25. 41. *Depart from me, ye Curſed, into Everlaſting. Fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels.* And 'tis like that may, if nothing elſe will, lay a Reſtriction upon you. And then it ſhall no longer be ſhamefully ſaid of you, that by encouraging others to the ſame Vice

Vice by your Example, you exceed in Impiety, even thoſe Wicked Perſons, againſt whom our bleſſed Saviour denounces Wo, *Mat.* 23. 15. and make both them and your ſelves twofold more the Children of Hell than before, but that you are now become ſo commendably kind both to your ſelves and others, in laying of them wholly aſide, that 'tis to be hoped they'll be forgotten by the Preſent Age, and unknown to thoſe which are to come. And moreover the Puniſhment of thoſe obſtinate and impenitent Swearers, which are already Damned, wou'd not

not be increaſed, as I am apt to Believe it is, when this Sin, which they help'd to Confirm and Propagate by their Practices, is committed here upon Earth. And ſo inſtead of Vexation here and Everlaſting Damnation hereafter, you may have Peace and Pleaſure here and Eternal Salvation hereafter: Which is the earneſt Deſire of

Yours ſincerely,

William Watſon.

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